

NOV 01 2001

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Maxwell brings conference to Mississippi

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Leadership expert John C. Maxwell, founder and president of the InJoy Group in Norcross, Ga., brought his national Reality Leadership conference to Ridgecrest Church, Madison, on October 19.

The conference, co-sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), attracted approximately 600 participants from both Christian and secular fields.

The Reality Leadership Conference has enjoyed large crowds during the 2001 national tour, with stops in cities from Tampa to Los Angeles to Detroit.

Using a combination of lecture, media, interactive elements, and workbook exercises, Maxwell pre-

sented the conference designed to help participants "overcome their greatest leadership challenges."

The conference covered four primary topics: Influencing Change; Resolving Conflict; Developing Leaders; and Making the Tough Call.

Maxwell creatively addressed the leadership challenges faced by ministers, church leaders, business leaders, and civic leaders.

"Leaders go first," said Maxwell, "and when it comes to change, leaders must be the first to lead the way as well."

Maxwell used a video featuring Brad Powell, pastor of Northridge Church, Detroit, to develop this theme. Powell, faced with a declining church in a transitional neighborhood in Detroit, realized that the church had had its glory days years earlier under the pastorate of J. Frank Norris of Fort Worth.

He realized that in order to survive, the church had to relocate. "Before you change an organization," Powell stated, "you've got

to find the common ground. You can't major on differences. Once we made the major decision — relocation — the rest of the changes were easy."

On this topic, Maxwell said, "I used to think leaders liked change and followers don't. That's not true; leaders don't like change anymore than followers unless it's their idea.

"Losing people after change is a sign of success. You can't make everyone happy and bring about change.

"A clown is called to make everyone happy. Want to be a leader or a clown?"

In dealing with conflict, Maxwell said, "You've got to have a strong belief in your future. You must focus on your vision. You have to start influencing the leaders behind the scenes.

"When there is no hope for the future, there's no power for the present. We get our energy from the belief that things are going to get better."

Maxwell conducted a phone interview with Karen Ford, director for a national sales company. Ford had failed at her initial attempt in building a sales team, but after retrenching and dealing with her personal skills, was able to achieve her goals.



LEADERSHIP LESSONS — Several members of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board attended the Reality Leadership Conference hosted by John Maxwell at Ridgecrest Church, Madison, October 19. Debating the finer points of the conference are (from left) Don Lum, Sonny Adkins, Steve Stone, Jerry Mixon, and Tom Prather. (Photo by Tony Martin)

"I came to realize that if I couldn't lead myself, I couldn't lead others," Ford said.

"Leaders need to learn to fail properly," Maxwell stated. "Most people don't know how to fail. When you fail, you can leave the situation, or you can develop the emotional capacity

to get back up. More leaders stop leading because of their emotional response to failure than any other reason."

"How do you develop leaders?" Maxwell asked. "You find the potential leaders and equip them to do the task."

The final session used a video case study featuring Kevin Myers, pastor of Crossroads Community Church near Atlanta. Myers was faced with the ordeal of firing a church staffer who was his closest friend.

"You make this kind of tough call when you're faced with living with the problems of growth versus the problems of stagnation. When you're convinced you've identified the problem, when your winning season is fading, and when you realize that it's your responsibility as a leader — that's when you make the tough call," Maxwell said.

Maxwell, 54, is a former senior pastor. He has written 21 books, including *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*, and *The Right to Lead*.

Two of his books — *Failing Forward: Turning Your Failures Into Stepping Stones for Success*, and *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* — earned spots on the New York Times business best sellers list.



AND FURTHERMORE — John Maxwell, founder and president of the InJoy Group in Norcross, Ga., drives home a pointed comment during the Reality Leadership Conference at Ridgecrest Church in Madison, October 19. (Photo by Tony Martin)

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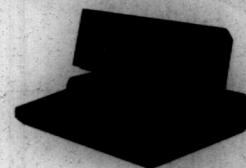
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VOLUME 125 NUMBER 37
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date.

The necessity, absurdity of war

The United States of America has suffered grave war crimes with the terrorist destruction of the World Trade Towers in New York City, the attack on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and the crash of the hijacked jetliner in Pennsylvania. That much is certain.

The United States has also been the victim of acts of war in the recent past, in the form of the deadly bombings of the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen, the embassies in Africa, and Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, to name only a few of the most infamous crimes.

Now that the government has fixed the blame for these atrocities on Osama bin Laden, our country is resolute in bringing about his downfall and eliminating the threat posed by other members of the well-established worldwide terror network.

We are at war, and justifiably so. We should never be guilty of taking this or any other war lightly, however, for even in its noble execution it is not God's best for us. He will surely grieve the loss of life on both sides.

The personal cost will be high for each of us, too, realized through real sacrifice, real blood, and real tears. This is not a blockbuster Hollywood movie, and this is not a 128-bit video game. This is the real thing.

It has fallen to us to prosecute this war, not only for ourselves but for the good of mankind. Even so, we must not forget the terrible price of war.

Along the Western Front of the Great War (World War I) sat the French town of Verdun, the scene of an 11-month battle in 1916 that stands as one of the bloodiest encounters of one of the bloodiest wars of all time.

German crown prince Frederick Wilhelm planned to break France's morale by capturing the city. Defending French General Henri Petain is famous for uttering the war cry, "They shall not pass!"

After several months of bitter stalemate that saw virtually no gain by either side, British General Sir Douglas Haig attacked

the Germans at the Somme in an attempt to relieve the pressure on Verdun.

Through months of attacks and counterattacks at Verdun, the French suffered 540,000 casualties and the Germans lost more than 430,000 soldiers. In the Battles of the Somme, the Allies took more than 600,000 casualties and the Germans lost more than 500,000 soldiers.

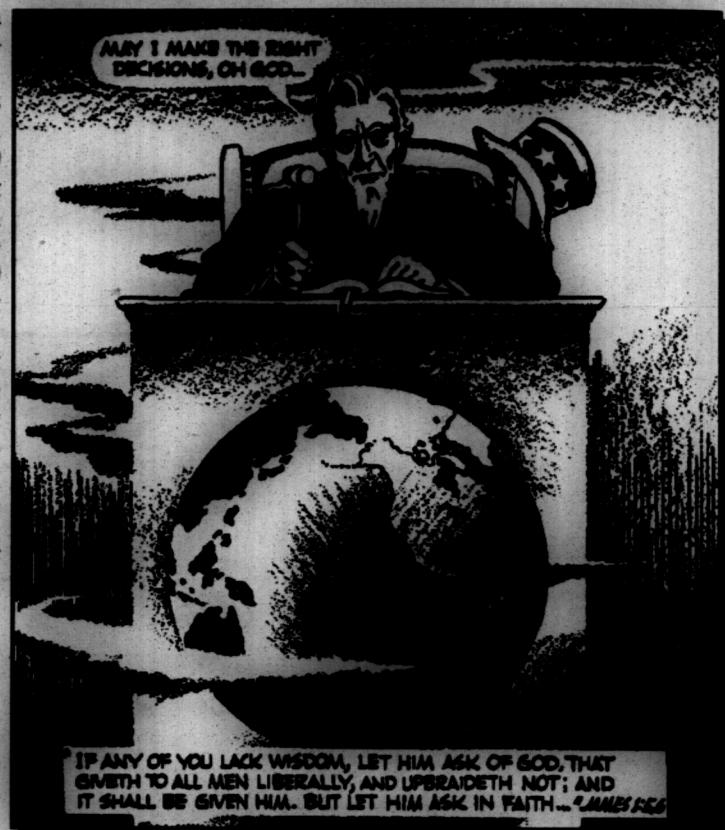
In the end — after almost two million casualties — the Germans withdrew without having advanced any closer to Verdun than four miles.

The French countryside remains scarred to this day. An article in the October 18 issue of the Wall Street Journal details the work of British amateur historian Christina Holstein, who has made the chronicling of the epic battle her life's work.

Anywhere she stops to run her fingers through the fertile soil around Verdun, she sifts 85-year-old bullet casings and jagged artillery shrapnel. Farmers often plow up foot-long, unspent cannon shells. Last year, Holstein discovered an infantryman's boot, not an unusual battlefield discovery except for the fact that a human calf bone extended from it.

The French and German trenches are still visible, as are the large craters caused by the most powerful and technologically advanced weapons of the day — the weapons that found their marks with two million dead or wounded soldiers.

That's hard for us to imagine today. "Verdun is the most tragic place you can think of with the exception of Auschwitz," said Dominique Moisi, deputy director of the French Institute of International Affairs in Paris, in referring to the World War II Nazi concentration camp in which millions of Jews and others were exterminated.



"IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, THAT GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY, AND UPRAIETH NOT; AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM. BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH..." JAMES 1:5

"Auschwitz is a monument to human evil; Verdun is a monument to human absurdity," he said.

"There's nothing like Verdun," Holstein added. "This is a place where the world changed."

New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania are places where our world changed, too, and now we find ourselves caught up in the necessity and absurdity of war. In this war, like all wars, people will die. Families will be altered forever. The course of history could well be changed.

We should also remember that this war, like all wars, will send far too many people into eternity without the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. If that's not enough to drive you to your knees before Almighty God, what will?

added to the list of names as a Friend of the Court.

On the opposite side of the form is an affidavit, to be completed only by women who have had an abortion and wish to tell their story. Each affidavit must be notarized.

These affidavits will be presented along with McCorvey's and Cano's affidavits.

The completed forms can be mailed to Trinity Baptist Church, 7200 Swinnea Road, Southaven, MS, 38671. Affidavits can be mailed to the same address and will be handled confidentially.

It is our hope to present these completed forms and affidavits to Allan Parker at the rally on November 8. This will send a message that Mississippi Baptists are committed to the sanctity of human life.

For more information, e-mail me at docweeks@juno.com or call (662) 895-6225. Ask your pastor for a copy of the form from the pastor's packet, or contact the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission at (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: rwood@mbcb.org.

If you would like more information regarding Operation Outcry, visit their website at www.operationoutcry.org.

GUEST OPINION:

Operation Outcry: Silent no more

By Michael Weeks, pastor
Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch

good law because they believe that society 'depends on it.'

Under current law and the practices of the abortion industry, women are not told of the nature and consequences of abortion. A woman should be informed that abortion is the taking of a human life and the permanent termination of the mother-child relationship.

She must also understand the psychological, emotional, and physical consequences of that decision.

On November 8 at 7 p.m., Trinity Church in Southaven will host the Mississippi Operation Outcry rally. The public is invited.

Norma McCorvey and Sandra Cano will be among the guest speakers at the rally. Allan Parker, attorney and

president of the Texas Justice Foundation representing McCorvey and Cano, will present information regarding the court battle in New Jersey.

There is an opportunity for Mississippi Baptists to aid Operation Outcry. In the last pastor's packet from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board was a form from our Christian Action Commission to be duplicated for church members.

The form asks if the signee agrees with the following statement: *It is not in the human or legal interest of any mother to kill her own child. A mother's true interest is in her child's life and her relationship with her child. Roe v. Wade should be overturned.*

Those who agree with that statement can complete the form and have their name

Campers give nearly \$500,000 to missions

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Vacation wasn't just about hanging out at the pool or watching television for more than 70,500 teens and children attending Centrifuge, M-Fuge, Crosspoint, and Centri-Kid camps this summer.

Instead, they spent time learning more about God and giving to missions.

Campers attending Centrifuge across the nation gave \$445,120.76 to help fund home missions projects being conducted by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB).

The Centrifuge campers give alternately each year to projects sponsored by NAMB or the International Mission Board, said Joe Palmer, director of the student Southern Baptist Convention. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

LifeWay Christian Resources.

Centrifuge camps are designed for teens in grades seven through 12, with youth groups of all sizes from across the country coming together for a fast-paced week of Bible study, recreation, and inspiration.

Crosspoint campers gave a separate offering of \$40,697.36 to fund Southern Baptist international sports ministries around the world, Palmer said.

Crosspoint, a Christian sports camp for fourth-through eighth-graders that began in 1986, uses sports as a

ministry tool to reach children and adults. The camp includes a focus on athletic instruction, Bible study, and physical and spiritual growth.

"I believe that the offering reminds us of the stewardship that the Lord expects from Christians," Palmer said.

"Youth learn that God not only has a call for their lives, but also for the way they spend their money.

"Campers learn the joy of giving to help a hurting world, and our prayer is that this will last a lifetime," he pointed out.

Coach slams A&F catalog

WASHINGTON (BP) — Joe Gibbs, NASCAR team owner and Hall of Fame former coach of the Washington Redskins, has added his voice to family groups protesting clothing retailer Abercrombie & Fitch's (A&F) use of sexual imagery in its marketing to young people, CNSNews.com reported Oct. 12. "I am appalled at your efforts to market clothing by using sexually suggestive photographs and an obvious promotion of gratuitous sexual behavior and promiscuity," Gibbs said in a letter to A&F chairman Michael Jeffries. "I think most Americans would consider these images to be pornographic in nature," he said. Gibbs blasted the A&F management for endorsing the marketing program. "The idea that each of you approved a campaign that distributes these sexually suggestive images to make a profit is, in my opinion, stooping as low as you can go," Gibbs said. In his letter, Gibbs vowed to

Gibbs become involved on a grassroots level to boycott A&F products. He also said he would enlist the support of the 500,000-member Fellowship of Christian Athletes and of Young Life, an organization of more than 1 million young people and their adult sponsors, "to get the message out about your disgusting marketing." Hampton Carney, a spokesman for A&F, denied the catalog is pornographic. "It chronicles the college experience," he said. "It's very irreverent; it's tongue-in-cheek sense of humor. It's beautiful, healthy, sexy images, geared for college students." He called Gibbs' characterization of the catalog as pornographic "absurd." Bill Johnson, president of the American Decency Association, one of several family groups conducting petition drives against the retailer, said the efforts of Gibbs and others against the company were having an effect on sales as the holiday season approaches. A&F sales are down, despite the fact that the company has opened more stores nationwide, Johnson said. Illinois Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood also is urging consumers to boycott A&F and to sign an online petition to protest the firm's "soft core pornographic" catalog. She has created a web site, www.stopAandF.com.



GROWING IN SPIRIT — Prayer, Bible study, recreation, and missions, are key facets of camps sponsored each summer by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

848 publicly deciding to follow Christ in some type of vocational ministry; and 2,356 making other types of decisions.

Centrifuge began in 1979 with two locations and nearly 7,500 campers in attendance. In 2001, Centrifuge took place at seven stationary camps and also included three traveling teams and five special teams, serving a total of nearly 40,000 campers.

M-Fuge campers follow the basic plan of Centrifuge, but add another component by allowing campers to serve the community through various ministry projects. The projects include construction work, children's ministries or

work with the homeless, sick or elderly.

M-Fuge International, which began in 1999, combines Centrifuge elements with personal ministry opportunities in other countries.

NAMB mission projects to benefit from the campers' giving include:

- Fishermen's Club, a Southern Baptist ministry in Seattle to homeless teenagers.
- Campus ministries in emerging regions.
- Summer and semester student missionaries in emerging areas where missionaries may not have been stationed before.
- Missions work in Utah during the 2002 Winter Olympics, including development of evangelistic resources, summer/semester mission projects and volunteer training.

While missions and missions giving are an integral part of the summer camps, Palmer also underscored what kids learn about the Bible and the ministry of Jesus Christ.

"It is our desire to help change youth culture," Palmer said. "We want kids to be properly related to Jesus Christ — to know him as their Lord and Savior, to have a proper worldview and to grow in discipleship."

Palmer said 10,266 campers made decisions for Christ this summer, with 1,817 accepting Jesus as their personal Savior; 5,127 rededicating their lives;



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

OCTOBER 25, 2001

VOL. 125

NO. 37

Looking back

10 years ago

Trustees of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. vote to include a commitment to biblical inerrancy in the school's new statement of purpose, becoming the first Southern Baptist seminary to adopt an explicit endorsement of inerrancy.

20 years ago

The Foreign Mission Board, meeting in annual session, approves its first \$100 million budget, which emphasizes escalation of world evangelism and church development, and votes to upgrade an inadequate pension plan for Southern Baptist foreign missionaries.

50 years ago

The Foreign Mission Board adopts a budget of \$5,180,000 for 1952 at its annual meeting in Richmond. This represents an increase of \$2,180,000 over that of just four years ago for the missionary-sending agency of the Southern Baptist Convention.

2001 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

October 30-31 • First Church, Jackson

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29

Associational missions directors conference, 10:30 a.m., Baptist Children's Village, Jackson. For details, contact John Henry, (601) 947-4981, E-mail: ggbapt@datasync.com.

Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association, luncheon, 11:30 a.m., Ridgecrest Church, Madison; \$12 per person. Former Miss Mississippi Becky Pruitt will be guest. Call the church at (601) 843-1090 for reservations.

Ministers' Wives Conference, 1 p.m., fifth floor, First Church, Jackson. Contact Kay McDonnell, (601) 292-3305 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 305, E-mail: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org.

Mississippi Baptist Pastor's Conference afternoon session, 1:30 p.m., Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson.

Lay Missions Conference, 3 p.m., First Church, Jackson. Contact Carol Wright, (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334, E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org.

Lay Missions banquet, 5 p.m., First Church, Jackson, \$8.50 per person (reservations required). Contact Carol Wright, (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334, E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org.

Mississippi Baptist Pastor's Conference evening session, 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30

Seminary Extension breakfast, 7 a.m., Baptist Building chapel. Speaker is Bill Vinson, president of Seminary Extension. Contact Keith Gordon, (601) 292-3307 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 307, E-mail: kgordon@mbcb.org.

Annuitants' breakfast, 7:30 a.m., First Church, Jackson. Chris Elkins, SBC Annuity Board, speaker, complimentary. Contact Robin Nichols, (601) 292-3226 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 226, E-mail: rnichols@mbcb.org.

Mississippi College Christian Service alumni continental breakfast, 7:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall West, First Church, Jackson. No reservations required, complimentary.

Mississippi Baptist Convention, first session: 8:25 a.m., Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson.

Mississippi College School of Nursing, in conjunction with Baptist Healthcare Systems, Inc., will hold a health fair from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the fourth floor of First Church, Jackson. Free testing includes cholesterol, glucose, glaucoma, blood pressure, hearing, and stress screening. Flu vaccinations will be available for \$15. For details, contact Deborah Bolian at Mississippi College at (601) 925-3000.

Southwestern Seminary, noon luncheon, Calvary Church, Jackson. Order tickets from Dennis Salley, P.O. Box 153, Valley Park, MS 39177. \$8.50 per person.

Southern Seminary alumni luncheon, noon, Baptist Building Skyroom, Tickets are \$10 per person. Contact Carl White at (601) 482-0191, E-mail: cwhite@highlandbaptist.net.

Mid-America Seminary alumni luncheon, noon, Denney's Restaurant, Jackson. Tickets are \$15 per person.

Speaker is Gray Allison, president emeritus of the seminary. For details, contact David Sapp at (662) 473-4447, E-mail at dwsapp@watervalley.net.

New Orleans Seminary alumni luncheon, noon, First Church, Jackson, \$10 per person. Speaker is Jerry Pounds, vice president for development. For details, contact Michael Glenn at (601) 876-3436, or visit the seminary booth during the convention.

Mississippi Baptist Convention second session, 1:30 p.m., Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson.

Chaplains' banquet, 4:45 p.m., Baptist Building Skyroom, Tickets for nonmembers are \$8.50 per person. Contact Elaine Smith (601) 292-3361 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 361, E-mail esmith@mbcb.org.

Blue Mountain College alumni dinner, 5:30 p.m., Galloway United Methodist Church, Jackson. Speaker is Eddie Meeks, Bible professor. \$10, no reservations required. Tickets at door or booth.

Mississippi Baptist Convention, third session, 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson.

William Carey College alumni fellowship, immediately following close of evening MBC session, Baptist Building chapel. Speaker is Larry Kennedy, president. No reservations are necessary.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31

Bivocational ministers fellowship breakfast, 7 a.m., Baptist Building chapel, complimentary. No reservations are required.

Mississippi Baptist Convention fourth session, 8:25 a.m., Sanctuary of First Church, Jackson.

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Baptist Building, immediately following close of fourth convention session.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the 2001 Mississippi Baptist Convention will take place on the second floor above the State Street entrance of First Church, Jackson. Volunteers from First Church, Jackson, will begin registering messengers at noon on Monday, Oct. 29. Registration will resume at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 30, and Wednesday, Oct. 31.

CONVENTION OFFICE

The convention office will be located across from the registration area (see above). Incoming messages will be received at (601) 949-1924, and will be posted at the convention office. An outgoing telephone line will be available for local and long distance (credit card only) calls. Lost and Found will be located at the convention office.

PARKING

The Hinds County Sheriff's Office will provide security for parking at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds and at the Baptist Building during the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Because of construction in the parking lots of First Church, Jackson, convention-goers are requested to park in the secured area at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds just off Jefferson Street and take the shuttle service to the convention (see map on this page).

Enter the lot on Jefferson Street at gate number three across from the Naval Reserve headquarters. Free shuttle service will begin at 1 p.m. on October 29 before the first session of the Pastors Conference and continue until 9:30 p.m. The shuttle will run October 30 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. On October 31, shuttle service will run from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please note that the Baptist Building parking lot has been reserved for convention-goers October 30-31 on a first-come basis. Convention attendees are requested to cross streets at designated crosswalks because of construction and heavy traffic. The Skywalk over State Street will not be available.

Convention-goers are also cautioned against over-parking on meters and illegal parking. Tickets issued by Jackson police cannot be forgiven. Improperly parked cars may be towed. Most area lots are privately owned. Parking on those reserved lots is not recommended.

DISPLAY AREA

The display area and the LifeWay Christian Resources bookstore will be located in Fellowship Hall East on the ground level floor of First Church, Jackson.

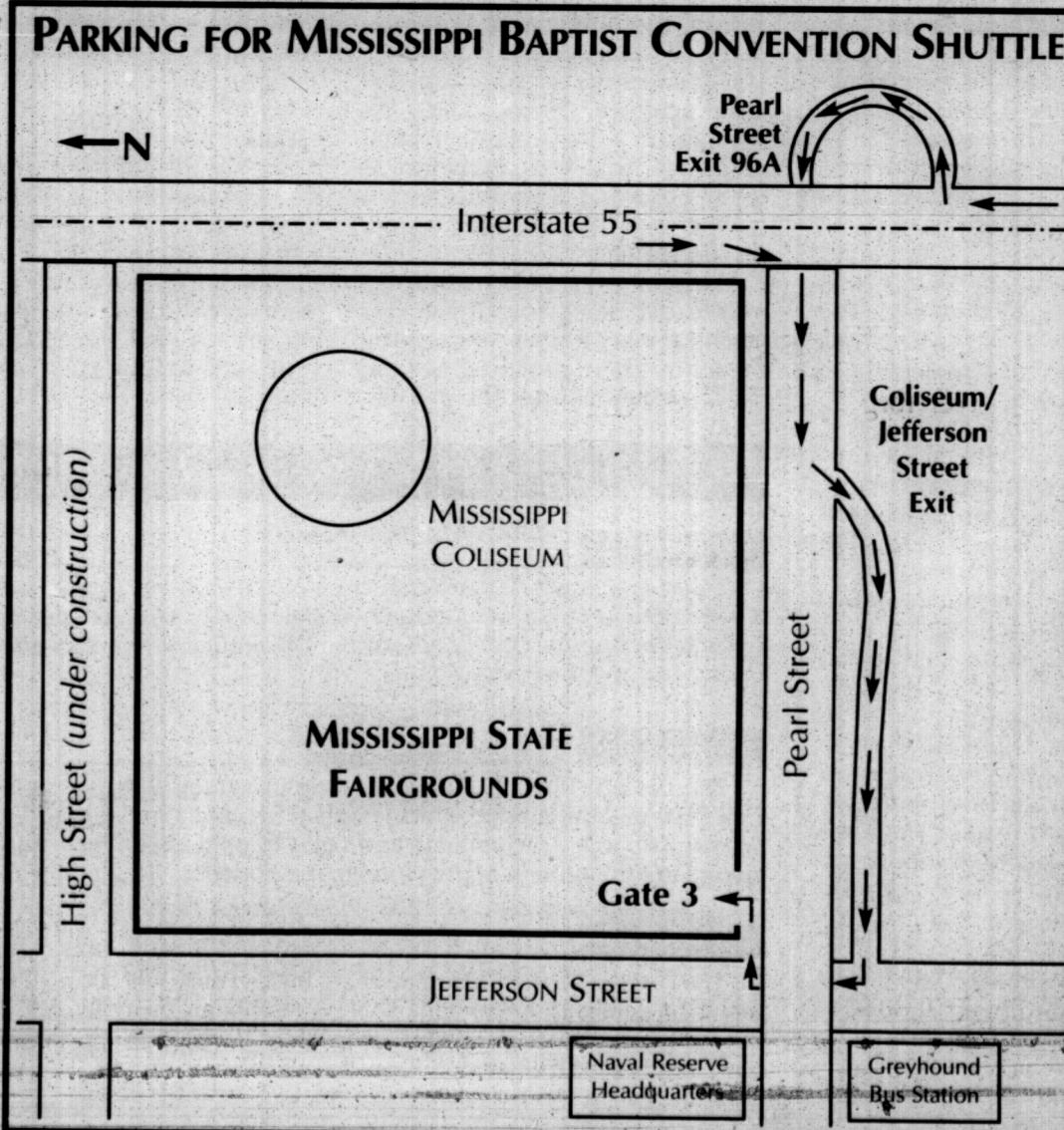
CHILDCARE

The preschool childcare facility has moved to a new location. It is now in rooms underneath the Sanctuary off President Street facing the New Capitol, on the opposite side of the church from its former location at the drive-through off State Street.

Preschool childcare is available for ages birth through five beginning with the Pastor's Conference on Oct. 29 and continuing through each session of the convention.

The procedure is as follows: 1. Register each child by name, parent, and church. 2. Obtain security card for each child at registration. 3. Label all belongings. 4. For infants, advise childcare workers of feeding schedule. 5. Childcare opens 20 minutes before each session starts and closes 20 minutes after each session ends. Children may remain in preschool area during the convention lunch break on Tuesday, Oct. 30, if parents provide lunch for each of their children.

For more information, contact First Church preschool secretary Debra Rollison at (601) 949-1904, E-mail: drollison@fbcj.org.



American women continue in legal limbo

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (BP) — The Texas minister keeping watch on the Afghanistan trial of eight foreign relief workers, including two Americans, has learned their Pakistani attorney hopes a decision will be forthcoming soon.

Interviewed by cell phone from Islamabad, Pakistan, Danny Mulkey, assistant pastor of Antioch Community Church in Waco, said the proceedings under Afghanistan's Taliban rulers are unlike anything in American courts.

Thus a decision could be rendered by the Afghan supreme court when attorney Atif Ali Khan returns to the nation's capital, Kabul, the weekend of Oct. 19, he said.

Mulkey met with Khan the evening of Oct. 17 to discuss the cases of Dayna Curry, 29, and Heather Mercer, 24, who were among the eight foreigners and 16 Afghan coworkers arrested Aug. 3 for allegedly sharing their faith with Afghan citizens.

The two Baylor University graduates were active in Antioch Community Church before going overseas to work with a German-based ministry, Shelter Now.

"It's all paperwork," Mulkey said of the confusing situation that required a written defense to be presented to the court.

"He's going back this weekend and they may already have a verdict. Or, he may not have to go because they will already have reached a decision. Every time, he's got to get a new visa to go back into the country."

Before communications were cut off

with the capital of Kabul about 10 days ago, Mulkey said they had been able to relay messages to Curry and Mercer via telephone and fax.

The Antioch staffer and the women's parents are still able to get notes delivered through the attorney and shuttle supplies to them.



Curry

Mercer

"With as many bombs as are falling, it's a little scary but they've got their heads up and are praying," Mulkey said. "They want us to do the same. They're thanking the Lord for a stretching experience."

While he hasn't met with Mercer's parents, Mulkey saw Curry's mother, Nancy Cassell, on Oct. 17. He said she is weathering the tension well and trusting in the Lord for her daughter's release.

"I'm doing okay, too," Mulkey said. "I get to thinking sometimes that I'm very ready to go home, but how much more do

Heather and Dayna think that? So I stop that kind of thinking real quick.

"Every day I thank the Lord for letting me be here. This is an honor, to represent so many people back home who are praying. I'm in touch with my family, at least by e-mail, and they're doing okay, too.

"It makes it easier when they're in agreement that I should be here."

Back at their home church, a prayer vigil for Curry and Mercer continues but participation has decreased, associate pastor Kevin Johnson said.

"We had filled [the prayer room] 24 hours a day for up to eight or nine weeks after Aug. 3," Johnson said. "The last two weeks we have found some of our folks are getting weary.

"The middle of the night and work hours are hard, so we have staff rotating during work hours."

The staff also is tired of fielding a flood of media inquiries, with senior pastor Jimmy Seibert telling reporters recently he has been getting up to 40 calls a day.

Despite the demands on their time, the associate pastor said Curry and Mercer's ordeal has had a positive impact on the 1,200-member congregation.

There has been a sense of unity and purpose among the people, who are realizing they need to take the message of Christ to the world, Johnson said.

The church asked that people also pray for continued protection and grace for the imprisoned Afghan Christians "as we have no word on the next steps for them."

CHURCH GROWTH GUIDELINES, FROM THE CANTON FLEA MARKET

I just missed attending my 32nd consecutive Canton Flea Market. I have known a lot of people who have gone. I see them coming and going. I hear about the reports of them being there. I have even watched a lot of the television coverage as they show the masses of people as they enjoy this wonderful experience.

Still, I have never attended. I do not know if my absence from the flea market makes me eligible for the Guinness Book of World Records, but if I continue to live, I'll continue to add to my years of "no shows." Now, I'm not against the flea market, but I do have to admit I get almost as excited about missing it as some folks do about attending it.

If the estimates are correct, and I believe they are, the population of Canton doubles, triples, or quadruples on the day of the flea market. Folks come from everywhere and stay all day. They shop till they drop! Then, the flea market paramedics revive them and they begin again. It is one of the largest flea markets not just in the state, the south, or the country, but in the world!

Though I am not a regular attendee I have observed, to my amazement, the secrets of their success. We could learn from these folks. I know that many of you, in your efforts to reach people and to build the



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Kingdom of God, have fallen into the trap of trying to be open, warm, and accommodating to folks, but apparently we have gotten it all wrong. Being user-friendly is not really a part of the flea market experience. Let me explain what I mean.

For one thing, churches try to provide worship times that are the most accommodating to the people. Well, you can forget that. Before 6 a.m. I was watching the television news as the helicopter coverage of the Canton Flea Market was showing the stream of cars arriving for the day's festivities.

Just after 5:30 a.m., in total darkness, carloads of folks were up and at 'em! Have you ever heard folks mumble and complain because they couldn't get to church on time, or couldn't get to Sunday School on time? Why, it starts at 9:30 or 9:45 a.m.! Well, the problem seems to be that we start too late! Lets crank up the prelude to about 5:15 a.m. and start singing praises by 5:30 a.m.

The second problem that we have is related to parking. Virtually every church I know has fine, paved, accessible parking. Big mistake! Why? It's just

absolutely too convenient! Folks don't like that. Go to the flea market and try to get a parking place and see what it's like.

Apparently what we need to do is to find a parking area three, four, maybe even five blocks away from the church, and let people wrestle with the traffic, park in a bad spot, walk a long way, and then they would come in droves!

The third thing I noticed is this. We absolutely don't charge enough! I know there are people who say that all we do is talk about money in the church, but you and I both know that is not true.

The truth is, I do not know of a church anywhere of any kind that charges people to come to the worship services — but, you see, that's all wrong because I learned that at every booth, every vendor up and down the streets and around the Square at Canton charges people for every little thing they get. **EVERYTHING!** Whether you eat it, sit on it, or just sit and look at it, you get charged for it — and it works! So let's give it a shot at church.

I know these prices might be low, but what about 50 cents for

a bulletin? A couple of dollars for a beautiful special in music? Maybe a dollar per person for the sermon and, hey, we provide child care! That ought to be worth a few bucks. So, let's get with the program and start charging folks more.

One last thing caught my attention. It's something people apparently do not like: plain overall convenience. At the church we try to make everything convenient. We try to keep the temperature within one degree of everybody's tolerance level in the congregation. It's not easy, but we work at it.

We try to adjust the sound system so that everybody present, from teenagers to the elderly, can understand what's taking place. As for bathrooms, they are out every door and down every hall. Facilities are there at your convenience.

Is any of that stuff available at the flea market? You've got to be joking! Some days it is 100 degrees with 100% humidity. Occasionally, they have had torrential, all-day rains, and they don't even provide umbrellas!

Yes sir, I'm here to tell you that we could learn a great deal from the flea market's festivities! I know I have certainly learned and while I may not be completely on target in some of my understanding, one thing I am sure about and that is that we generally do the things that we want to do — whether it has to do with church, or flea markets, or anything else!

Be on time for Sunday School!



Daylight Savings
Time ends at
2 a.m. on
Sunday, October 28

Turn clocks back one hour
before you go to bed on
October 27.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Parkway Church, Houston, recently broke ground for its new Family Life Center. The 8,800 square foot facility will contain a full-court gym for activities and fellowship; kitchen; dining room; youth assembly room; game room; and classrooms. The current fellowship hall will be converted into an educational building with classrooms and a choir rehearsal room. The Building Committee and staff pictured (from left) are Gregg Thomas, pastor; Sandra Naron; Ilene Gilbert; Tammy Johnson; Diane Pullen; Ray Walker, minister of music and senior adults; Conway Nichols; Keith Jernigan; Troy Comer, minister of youth and education; Jerry Black; and Larry Wright.

First Church, Foxworth, will host its first annual fall festival, Oct. 31, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For additional information, contact Dale Jones, children's minister, at (601) 736-4401.

Fall Festival will be held at Bethel Church, Aberdeen, Oct. 27. Supper will be served at 6 p.m. A Singing by The Gospel Travelers of West Point will start at 7 p.m. Chris Colburn is pastor.

Farmhaven Church, Madison County, sent a card to President Bush stating that the congregation would pray for him daily during this crisis. Every member present on Sunday, Sept. 16, signed the card. Pictured (from left) are Nellie Chafin who directed the signing; Charles Gentry, pastor; and Casie Tadlock, one of the youngest members.



Chafin, Gentry, and Tadlock

Curtis L. Guess, pastor of Weir Church, Weir, will be honored on Oct. 28 on the occasion of his retirement from the ministry. Guess and his wife, the former Geneva Fulce, are both from Choctaw County. He attended Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. Frank Harmon, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will be the speaker for the morning worship service, followed by a fellowship dinner. A reception will be held in the fellowship hall from 2-4 p.m.



Guess

Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. Frank Harmon, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will be the speaker for the morning worship service, followed by a fellowship dinner. A reception will be held in the fellowship hall from 2-4 p.m.

First Church, Soso, will celebrate its centennial with special events and services. Nonnie Jefcoat will preach and Ken Culpepper, former minister of music will present a mini-concert, on Nov. 4 at 11 a.m. The church's mixed ensemble will sing on Nov. 11 at 6:30 p.m. Services on Nov. 18 at 11 a.m. will include John Gilbert and Bud Parker, former pastors, and presentation of a centennial plaque by the Mississippi Historical Department. Lunch will be served at noon followed by the Gospel Strings in concert. Ralph Graves is pastor.

Immanuel Church, Vicksburg, will celebrate its 55th anniversary on Nov. 3 and 4. Saturday, registration begins at 4:30 p.m. in the activity building. Tom Rayburn of Clinton and former pastor, will be the guest speaker both days with Mike Thompson of Rayville, La., former minister of music, leading the music. There will be a potluck dinner at 5 p.m. followed by special music and testimonies. Sunday services will begin at 10 a.m. with Rayburn bringing the message.

Mt. Moriah Church, Bogue Chitto, will celebrate its annual

old fashioned day on Sunday, Oct. 28. Activities will include Sunday School at 10 a.m.; services at 11 a.m. with Mike Grenn as special guest; and a meal in fellowship hall. For additional information, call Danny Moss, pastor, at (601) 833-8858.

Union Church, Stewart, will celebrate its 125th anniversary on Nov. 18. Terry Wills is pastor and Howard Davis is associate pastor.

Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, will host Squire Parsons and his trio in concert on Oct. 27 at 7 p.m.



Acteens of Ludlow Church, Ludlow, raised \$1,390 at a fall festival on Oct. 6. The money will be used for the Acteens to attend the National Acteen Convention. Pictured (back row, from left) are Amy Moore, Kari Horn, Wanda Babb, Brandi Fitzhugh, Diana Scott, Brandy Callahan, and Chasity Williams; (front row) Melissa Denson, Cleary Renfrow, Brandi Patterson, Shannon Seaney, and Lynn Seaney. Not pictured are Tina Bishop and Joyce Trippie.

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BILLY GRAHAM
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HENRY BLACKABY
Jerry Drace and I are the only two people in the world who have done this. We have worked with families within the church. HOPE for the HOME will do just that.



STEPHEN OLORD
Praise the Lord for the ministry of Jerry Drace and I. We have worked with families within the church. HOPE for the HOME will do just that.



JOSEPH McDOWELL
The number one motivation of the people I meet is that they should be involved in ministry to the world. HOPE for the HOME will do just that.

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Walker and Dearing

Liberty Church, Newton County, held deacon ordination services for Ron Walker on Sept. 9. Mike Dearing was re-elected as active deacon. J. B. Costilow is pastor. Pictured (from left) are Walker and Dearing.

Freedom Church, Laurel, received an Eagle Award in recognition of their exceptional Sunday School growth. John Clendinning, on behalf

of LifeWay and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), presented the award. Pictured (from left) are Clendinning, consultant, MBCB; Charles Gordon, Jones County Association; Robby Johnson, pastor of Freedom Church; and Charles Burks, associate pastor of Freedom Church.

Deacon ordination services were held Sept. 16 at South McComb Church, McComb. New deacons pictured (front row, from left) are Charles McDaniel, Don Mercier, J. P. McInnis, Dicky McDaniel; (back row) Bob Wally, Rance Freeman, Lloyd Fleming, Pete Dickerson, and Ted C. Bowlin, pastor.



Clendinning, Gordon, Johnson, and Burks



Deacons of South McComb Church, McComb

Richmond Church, Tupelo, recently ordained Clay Anthony, pastor, to the ministry. Pictured (from left) are Anthony, his son Aslan, his wife LaNell, and Charlie Davis, pastor of Hunsinger Lane Church, Louisville, Ky.



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Crooked Creek, Silver Creek: Nov. 11-16; Sunday, 10 a.m. service followed by a covered dish dinner; 7 p.m. night-

ly; James Messer, evangelist; James Thames, music; Jimmy Jones, pastor.

Flowood, Flowood: Oct. 26-28; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.; S. A. (Sonny) Adkins, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Danny Brock, music.

New Zion, Crystal Springs: Nov. 11-14; 7 p.m. nightly; Rob Futral, Byram, evangelist; Scott Atkins, Jackson, music; Norris Curry, pastor.

CHURCH AVERAGING 100 in Sunday School seeks full-time associate pastor/minister of music and youth. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 2878 Old Hwy. 27, Vicksburg, MS 39180; or fax to (601) 636-7574.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Acteens of Evergreen Church, Louisville



Youth brotherhood of Evergreen Church, Louisville



RA's of Evergreen Church, Louisville



Younger GA's of Evergreen Church, Louisville

Evergreen Church, Louisville, recently held its awards ceremony. Acteens pictured (from left, front row) are Kayla Shumaker, Laura Foster, Sarah Peeples, Courtney Partridge, Ayla Vaughn; (back row) Daphne Partridge and Wanda Reed, teachers. Youth brotherhood (front row) are Shannon Cole, teacher; Hardy Joiner; Trey McDill; Daniel Cole; (back row) Phillip Foster; and Joey Reed. RAs (front row) are Chris Childs, teacher; Dylan Peavy; Phillip Johns; Josh Johns; and Greg Peeples, teacher. Not pictured is Zack Johns. Younger GAs (front row, from left) are Kimberley King and Mariah Clark; (back row) Rachael Peeples, Chelsea Peavy, Paulina Vaughn, and Rhonda King, teacher. Not pictured is Cassey White. Older GAs (from left) are Jessica McDill, Paige Papalambros, Anna Claire Peeples, Kristin Davis, Beth



Older GA's of Evergreen Church, Louisville

Papalambros, and Alicia Cole, teacher. Not pictured is Natalie Nunnery. Mission Friends (from left) are Abi McCook; Kathryn King; Savannah Cole; Audrey Richardson, teacher;

Emilee Johns; and Matthew Richardson.

Harvest Day will be held at Good Hope Church, Leake Association, on Oct. 28. Activities include Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; and dinner on the grounds. Wayne McGee is pastor.

First Church, Pascagoula, will present its first Judgment House, Oct. 25-28 from 6-9 p.m. For additional information and to make reservations, contact the church office at (228) 762-2343 or e-mail deborahc@fbc.net.

Faith Church, Jackson, will sponsor a musical worship service featuring Priority from Mississippi College on Oct. 28 at 10:30 a.m. For more information contact Greg Wolfe, pastor, at (601) 368-2983.



Mission Friends of Evergreen Church, Louisville

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Baptist Press recently held its first journalism conference. A total of 126 students representing 28 colleges and universities participated in the three-day conference. Categories for the awards presentation were merit, superior, excellent, and Baptist Press Best. In the overall newspaper division, Mississippi College (MC) was one of five schools who qualified for Baptist Press Best with the MC newspaper, The Collegian. 2000-2001 Collegian editor, Brian Blackwell, finished in third place among 63 entries in the Individual News Writing competition. In the Online Competition, The Collegian placed second.

Tommy King, professor of psychology at William Carey College (WCC), and several psychology students are assisting two publishing companies in redesigning and updating the two most commonly-used I.Q. tests in the United States. The new Stanford-Binet (Fifth Edition) should be available in spring of 2002. The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (Fourth Edition) is the most

widely used individual intelligence test in the world for assessing the intellectual functioning of school age children from six through sixteen years. King previously assisted the Riverside Publishing Company of Chicago in developing the Universal Nonverbal Intelligence Test (UNIT) - the first I.Q. test for the deaf developed in the United States since 1938. King also assisted the Institute of Personality and Ability Testing with the revision of the 16 Personality Factor (16PF) inventory using students in the Youth Challenge Program WCC conducts at Camp Shelby.

The Mississippi Theatre Association/Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (ACTF) will be held Nov. 7 through 10 at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) Jeff Davis Campus in Gulfport. The aims of this national theatre education program (KCACTF) are to identify and promote quality in college-level theatre production. There are three festivals: state, regional, and national. The state festival begins Nov. 7 with

MGCCC's production of Astronauts by Claudia Reilly at 8 p.m. Schools performing on Nov. 8 are Mississippi State University's production of The Classics Professor by John Pielmier at 9 a.m.; followed by Meridian Community College's production of NKS TLTS LPMR by Elliot Street at 3 p.m.; Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Perkinston campus will perform Tongue of a Bird by Ellen McLaughlin at 8 p.m. Schools performing on Nov. 9 are William Carey College's production of A Different Drummer by Gene McKinney at 10 a.m.; and Itawamba Community College will perform Thyestes by Seneca at 8 p.m. Schools performing on Nov. 10 are Delta State University's Anna Karenina by Helen Edmundson at 10 a.m.; followed by the University of Southern Mississippi's production of Blood Poetry by Howard Brenton at 3 p.m. For information on tickets or other information about the festival call Wayne Catlett at (228) 896-2530 or Ryan Pierini at (228) 897-3740.

GOD IS WORKING

Editor

I would like to respond to the letter written by Lou Carroll in the October 11 issue of the Baptist Record. To the statement that our Baptist denomination is not what it used to be, I say praise the Lord. Second, if any person or church is not depending on the Lord for answers or do not feel the Spirit working through their activities, it is not the fault of the denomination but the individual or church. If one wants the Spirit to work through one's self or church, all the denominations in the world can't stop that from happening.

I keep hearing the word "takeover" used over and over. If there was a takeover, who had it before the takeover? I attended most all those conventions and that there was always a majority vote. No one ever asked or told me how to vote.

The writer also said that our seminaries have been destroyed one by one. If by being destroyed, he means replacing professors like one I had when I was a stu-

dent who made fun of the Holy Spirit, then I would agree. I am a trustee at New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS). I have just returned from a trustee meeting. Someone has been giving the writer false information. NOBTS has the largest enrollment in the school's history. God is working in marvelous ways at NOBTS. Chuck Kelley is a great president.

Albert McMullen
Meridian

AIRING DIRTY LAUNDRY

Editor

I would like to answer Lou Carroll and the response given to the story "Disturbing Report," in the Sept. 20 and Oct. 11 issues.

I understand there was a wrong committed by Russell Kammerling, and I honestly believe he will be punished for his actions. I am confident that he will be tried and sentenced by our justice system and government for his crime (sin).

What I do not understand is why it is any of our business to know the dirty laundry of the

situation. If any one of us had committed a sin such as this I am assured that Haskell Stringer, Lou Carroll, or even I would not want our dirty laundry or the dirty laundry of our families published so all could see.

There is a way to tell the news and there is a way not to tell it. To the editor and Baptist Record staff, thanks you for your report and how you told the news without airing the dirty laundry for all to see.

Brian Tillman
Bay Springs

CHANGE HATE

Editor:

President Bush addressed how he responds to the hatred for America that is seen in some Islamic countries. He said he "is amazed that there is such misunderstanding of what our country is about, that people would hate us so much, because I know how good we are — we've got to do a better job of making our case." This statement put into words the frustrations we feel as a nation. The stress and anxiety we experience is rooted in that observation. We just can't believe that someone would hate us that much. It is inconceivable that someone would think we are so evil as to be willing to kill us at any cost. How can we make our case understood so that the Islamic countries will not hate us? That is a challenge to our

country, just as much as destroying the evil terrorists. We must change the way the world sees us and understands us so that they will not hate us so much.

Otey Sherman
Charleston

SEEKING MEMORIES

Editor

In February 2002, First Church, Clinton, will celebrate 150 years of fellowship and service. In connection with this celebration, we are soliciting the help of our fellow Mississippi Baptists. We need your memories, old photographs, and mementos connected with our church for display during a public tour of our facilities.

Please mail them by November 1 to Sesquicentennial Committee, Education Subcommittee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 72, Clinton, MS 39060.

For photographs and mementos, we are seeking snapshots, programs, certificates, and other items related to our church. We plan to scan or copy these documents and return them to you as soon as possible. If what you have is an object such as a GA cape, old quarterly, or other item, or if you do not want to send an original item, please write and tell us what you have. We will contact you about borrowing the item for display.

Cynthia Broome
Clinton



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Bethel, Aberdeen: 125th anniversary; Nov. 4; services, 10 a.m.; dinner served followed by The Gospel Travelers of West Point in concert. Chris Colburn is pastor.

Oak Grove, Carthage: 109th anniversary; Oct. 28; 10:30 a.m.; Tom Bentley, former pastor and missionary to South American countries, evangelist; special music led by Lamar Ethridge; music provided by Sonrise, a singing group; Paul H. Leber, pastor.

Liberty, Newton: Oct. 28; services, 10 a.m.-noon followed by dinner; J. B. Costilow, pastor.

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Ludlow (Scott): Oct. 28; 10 a.m.; noon meal in fellowship hall; Jim Burns, Standing Pine Church, Walnut Grove, guest speaker; Dwight Cooper, music; M. L. Wallace, pastor.

Hillsboro (Scott): Oct. 28;

worship, 11 a.m., message by Howard Benton, former pastor;

lunch; afternoon service with choir's presentation of Homecoming Day, musical by Irene Martin, director of music;

message by Herbert Eichelberger, former pastor; Doug Pitts, pastor.



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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Pass It On!

Acts 10

By Wayne Marshall

Several years ago Kurt Kaiser wrote a song that has a deep message for all of us. One of the lyrics read, "It only takes a spark to get a fire going." Another one read, "you want to pass it on!"

This week's lesson focuses on a family whose desire for the Good News changed their lives and the lives of the entire Gentile world.

A family must be searching (vv. 1-5). In Acts 10 Cornelius, a gentile, enters the picture of Gospel expansion.

The Scriptures tell us of his religious fervor. He was a man of prayer and good deeds to others. Yet with the practice of

religion and the position of ranking officer, he still needed something (someone!).

The vision of Cornelius was one of both inspiration and instruction. The angel of the Lord commended Cornelius on his devotion and charity. Yet the instructions were given to take another step. Though his deeds were good and his desires commendable, he did not know the truth of Jesus Christ.

The angel directed him to someone who could tell him the "good news" of the Gospel. Would the dedicated search of family end in truth or in tragedy?

Peter held the key to an



Marshall

entire group of people being invited to participate in the kingdom. In Acts 10:6-22 Peter has the vision of clean and unclean. Verse 15 instructs him: "what God hath cleansed call no man common."

The position, prejudices, and practice of Peter's life were about to change. He went with the servants of Cornelius on a trip that would brand the course of evangelism forever.

A family must be sensitive (vv. 10:23-33). For a devout Jew to enter the home of a Gentile was unthinkable. But the Good News transcends all cultures. Cornelius and Peter both had lessons they were to learn.

One sensitive area was the obedience of Peter. After his vision on the rooftop he became moldable in the hands of the Spirit. This would allow an entire family and ultimately,

an entire group of people to hear the Gospel and accept Jesus as Lord of their lives.

Could it be said today that our families and homes are awaiting the opportunity to share the Gospel with someone? Is our obedience up to date?

A family must be satisfied (vv. 10:34-43). The exchange of communication and testimony must have been exciting. Verses 24-33 share that exchange. As both men shared their vision it was obvious that the Good News of Jesus was about to take root in new, hungry, prepared hearts.

Three things are evident as Peter prepared to preach. First, there is an exercise in heavenly perception. Verse 34 tells us that Peter "perceived" what God had done. It means that he spiritually understood God's movement though he might not have culturally understood. Thank God for the spirit-

ual overriding the cultural barriers to the Gospel.

A second very evident conclusion was to be drawn here. God does not respect one group more than another (v. 34). How easy it is for us to miss sharing because of cultural prejudices. Cornelius, and all other Gentiles, may experience the satisfaction of a walk with Jesus because of Paul's obedience.

One final conclusion must be shared. In verses 39-43 the sermon of Peter is shared. His message is our message. Included in the outline are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. That message alone satisfies and saves. Cornelius found it to be true. Other families must learn its truth as one family shares with another.

This process remains God's plan so this week "PASS IT ON!"

Marshall is pastor of Longview Heights Church in Olive Branch.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Guidance in Godliness

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

By Dell Scoper

In his concluding remarks to the Thessalonian church the apostle Paul gave a series of 15 exhortations (5:13b-22). The first grouping related to their relationships with the church leaders; the second, to the disorderly, the fainthearted, and the spiritually fragile church members; the third, to the general character of the Christian life; and the last, to the appropriate exercising of spiritual gifts.

Guidance in relationships (vv. 12-15). From this text, three basic aspects of church leadership were recognized: to labor, to lead, and to teach. These continue to be the primary tasks of Christian leaders today.

Paul urged the brothers to adopt an attitude of support and respect for their leaders, designated as "them that labor among

you, who are over you in the Lord, and who admonish you."

Paul was stating, first of all, that these leaders derived their authority from their hard work in the ministry. The authority given them was thus not a matter of personal power but a moral responsibility to lead their brothers in spiritual growth. Only as a leader is under God's authority is he or she fit to lead.

Paul stated that the believers' attitudes toward their leaders should be to recognize their authority and show them respect in love. Paul urged both leaders and followers to "live in peace with each other," exhibiting a positive achievement of mutual respect for one another.

Guidance in spiritual matters (vv. 16-22). According to Paul, constant joy, ceaseless



Scoper

prayer, and boundless thanks were three apparent manifestations of the Christian's life with God. "Be joyful always," a command repeated over two dozen times in Paul's epistles, has been called "essentially Christian," since our faith is based on "glad tidings of great joy."

What does "pray continually mean?" Some sort of nonstop praying? No, it means our life should be lived in a continual spirit of prayer, recognizing that prayer as an activity is a part of life, but prayer as an attitude is the whole of life.

"Give thanks in all circumstances," is a command that grows out of the other two, because prayer and joy flow out of hearts in a constant stream of gratitude. Paul wants us to understand that if we focus on God rather than our circumstances, we can be thankful.

Obedience to these three is difficult, but the rewards that accompany a life of constant joy, prayer, and gratitude are rich and full.

At this point Paul shifts from the inner life to communal worship. Order and control within the corporate worship service was necessary, but over-control was detrimental. To deny or restrict the gift of prophecy was likened to quenching the burning presence of God.

Prophecy was not always prediction. It was also proclamation. The Thessalonians were instructed not to "treat prophecies with contempt." However, Paul, in recognizing the danger of false prophecies, urged the believers to "test everything," and reject whatever did not strengthen and build up the church.

Guidance in reliance (vv. 23-28). After these fifteen exhortations Paul began to pray, addressing the God (who is the source) of peace, making the contrast with the Thessalonians' lack of harmony within the church.

The objective of Paul's prayer was wholeness. He prayed that God would sanctify them "through and through (wholly)," i.e., that every

aspect of their life — spirit, soul, body — will be preserved intact and without blame at the Lord's return.

Before he completed his benediction, Paul had two final requests and one charge: "Brothers, pray for us," gives us a picture of the humility of this great saint, that he felt the need to be strengthened by these new converts' intercessory prayers.

Paul's second request was to "greet ... holy kiss" (5:26). This was a symbol of cordial Christian fellowship and an expression of spiritual kinship. His charge "to have this letter read..." was his insistence that it be shared with the entire church. Many needed its comfort and guidance, and all would be inspired to respond to Paul's exhortations.

Paul's farewell (5:28) is the apostolic benediction in its briefest form, an invocation of grace, the unmerited favor of God as revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scoper is a member of First Church, Laurel.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs



The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be con-

no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's name and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital prints are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted on a CD-RW disk, either (a) e-mail, (b) through a 3 1/2 inch floppy disk, or (c) CD-RW disk. Please attach a CD-RW disk with your photo.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. The deadline for news items is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

Experts: don't back away from Muslims

Pakistani Baptists ask for prayer

WASHINGTON (BP) — When the bombing in Afghanistan began, Baptists in a church in neighboring Pakistan had just concluded the evening service. The pastor, Daniel Sardar, has asked Baptists around the world to pray for believers there and their witness for Christ at this very critical time.

Sardar says that the government has so far protected his church and they are safe but there is a lot of anti-American resentment in the area where they live and Christians are accused of being against their country and for America. He emphasizes that Osama bin Laden is a hero of Islam in that part of the world and Christians are treated as foreigners.

Sardar says that they have complete trust in the Lord, "We know that he is in control of everything and every situation."

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Christians should not use the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 as an excuse to back away from the Muslim world, according to Christian experts on Islamic beliefs.

Yet while most Muslims do not participate in terrorist activities, Islam is an aggressive missionary religion that is competing for the hearts and minds of people around the world, added a longtime missionary among Muslims.

"The average Muslim is not about to engage in [terrorist] activity," said Robert Douglas, professor of intercultural studies at Lincoln (Ill.) Christian Seminary. "Muslims that I have known and been in touch with, both in this country and around the world, generally are not supportive of this type of thing."

Meanwhile, the missionary, who cannot be identified for security reasons, said, "While most of Islam's leaders are not terrorists, they still are set on converting everyone in the world to their religion.

"Islam is now the largest non-Christian religion in America, and it is growing in Europe, Africa, and other parts of the world."

Some Americans have expressed a growing fear of Muslims and Islamic nations following the Sept. 11 attacks against the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon, but for Christians fear should neither prevent them from reaching out to Muslims in the United States nor from serving in Muslim areas, Douglas said.

While missionaries have always been at some risk in Muslim nations, that risk has not increased significantly following the attacks, he added.

"Conditions in the Muslim world generally have not changed," Douglas said. "We think of a great deal of terrorist activity and fear, but life goes on [there], so people should not use these events to back away from the Muslim world."

Christians can offer assurance of eternal salvation, noted N.S.R.K. Ravi, an expert on Eastern religions for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

One motivation for terrorists is that martyrdom, according to some Muslim writings, guarantees a place in paradise. Islam normally offers no such promises.

Ravi also said that in the modern pluralistic world Islamic scholars should be more vocal in pointing out more peaceful interpretations of their writings.

"Islam speaks a lot about the mercy of God, but Islamic scholars have to find and research and interpret the mercy of God more to their followers," Ravi said. "It is the Islamic people of the West who have to be mediators, saying to the fundamentalist states, 'This is not the Koran. You are going on the wrong path.'"

The missionary, meanwhile, noted that Islam's holy book, the Koran, does contain passages that seem to justify violence against people who do not submit to Islam's rule.

Ravi also stressed building long-term "bridges of friendship" with Muslims, taking the time to understand their faith and sharing in ways that are culturally appropriate.

An NAMB video, "The Cross or the Crescent," explores Islam in-depth from the perspective of both Islamic leaders and Christian observers.

Douglas has been encouraged by encounters in recent days with Christian workers in Muslim cultures who are eager to continue serving there. The trauma of the last three weeks has

"in no way lessened their desire and commitment to carry on the cause of Christ," he reported.

"Christians need to be willing to venture out even in what appear to be difficult and sometimes dangerous areas for the cause of Christ," he said. "It's worth going into difficult areas. It's worth taking risks. Can we do any less?"

◆ As conditions in Afghanistan change, Southern Baptists will have key opportunities to proclaim the gospel and minister to people in crisis. For information on how you and your church can help, visit <http://www.imb.org>. Contributions can be sent to International Mission Board, General Relief Fund — Afghanistan, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

◆ North American Mission Board's "Belief Bulletin" on Islam: <http://www.namb.net/root/resources/beliefbulletins/religions/islam.asp>.

◆ "The Cross or the Crescent" resource kit: http://www.namb.net/enews/closeout/cross_crescent.htm.



SUBMISSION — Observant Muslims submit to prayer five times daily. Islam is an aggressively evangelical faith that has made significant inroads in the United States and in states such as Mississippi over the past few decades. (BP photo)

For example, Surah 8, verse 5 states: "Fight and slay the Pagans [non-Muslims] wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem [of war]."

In fact, the word "Islam" means submission. It emphasizes submission of Muslims to God, but also submission of non-Muslims to Muslims, the missionary said.

"Islam's domineering nature is seen the clearest in lands where it is the predominant religion," the missionary said. "There, Christians are second-class citizens, at best, and often face persecution. Muslims who convert to Christianity often face persecution from their families, prison, torture, or death."

Douglas warned against allowing anger to embitter Christians towards Muslims.

"We cannot allow our attitude toward missions and outreach to be determined by the bad acts of a few people," he said.

Instead of fear or apathy, Douglas hopes the attacks will spur Christians to understand Islam and take Christ's love to Muslims around the world.



SEEKING GOD — As the followers of Mohammed seek God through their faith, Christian experts on Islam are urging the followers of Jesus to step up efforts to spread the Good News around the world. (BP photo)